

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 16055 141058Z

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9463

INFO CINCPACREPPHIL SUBIC BAY RP

13TH AF CLARK AB RP

CINCPAC

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 16055

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PONS, RP

SUBJECT: NO MILITARY PURGE

1. IN NOVEMBER 13 PRESS CONFERENCE MARKING DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE'S 36TH ANNIVERSARY, SECRETARY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE ENRILE TOLD REPORTERS PRESIDENT MARCOS WOULD NOT BE CONDUCTING A PURGE OF THE MILITARY ORGANIZATION. AFTER NOTING THAT OVER 1000 OFFICERS AND MEN HAD BEEN REMOVED FROM THE SERVICE SINCE THE IMPOSITION OF MARTIAL LAW AS A RESULT OF STRICT ENFORCEMENT OF MILITARY RULES AND REGULATIONS, ENRILE COMMENTED: " IT IS QUITE FORTUNATE THAT THE PRESIDENT DID NOT UNDERTAKE WHAT YOU WOULD CALL A PURGE IN THE MILITARY BECAUSE HE IS VERY MUCH AWARE OF THE CLEANUP DRIVE WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES." ENRILE ALSO SAID, "WE HAVE BEEN CLEANING UP THE MILITARY EVER SINCE THE DECLARATION OF MARTIAL LAW. THIS IS THE REASON THERE IS NO PURGE IN THE RANK AND FILE OF THE ARMED FORCES." THE DND SECRETARY ADMITTED, HOWEVER, SERIOUS PROBLEMS EXISTED IN THE MILITARY WHICH COULD NOT BE CLEANED UP OVERNIGHT AND HE ASSURED THE PRESS, "THERE WILL BE NO LETUP IN THE CAMPAIGN UNTIL ALL THE PROBLEMS ARE SOLVED."

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PAGE 02 MANILA 16055 141058Z

2. NRILE'S REMARKS WERE GIVEN FRONT-PAGE TREATMENT IN ALL MANILA DAILIES MORNING OF NOVEMBER 14, WITH TIMES JOURNAL CARRYING STORY AS LEAD ARTICLE UNDER BANNER HEADLINE, "NO MILITARY PURGE - DND." EXPRESS EDITORIALIST IS LAVISH IN PRAISE OF MILITARY: "AND THERE CAN BE NO DENYING OF THE FACT THAT ALMOST EVERY FACET OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW SOCIETY - FROM THE METRO MANILA SANITATION DRIVE TO RE-ESTABLISHING PEACE AND NORMALCY IN MINDANAO - CARRIES THE HAND OF THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT, ACKNOWLEDGED TIME AND AGAIN BY A GRATEFUL PRESIDENT AND COUNTRY."

3. COMMENT: SECRETARY ENRILE BEGAIN PUBLIC REHABILITATION OF MILITARY'S IMAGE (TARNISHED BY PRESIDENT'S PURGE THREAT) IN A SPEECH LAST OCTOBER 19. SINCE THEN, EFFORT TO ENHANCE PUBLIC'S APPRECIATION OF MILITARY HAS PROCEEDED UNABATED. MILITARY, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE MAINSTAY OF MRS. MARCOS'S MUCH PUBLICIZED CAMPAIGN TO CLEAN UP METRO MANILA. ENRILE'S FLAT STATEMENT THAT THERE WILL BE NO PURGE OF MILITARY, COMING AS IT DOES ON EVE OF DND'S ANNIVERSARY, IS LOGICAL CULMINATION OF THIS CAMPAIGN. WE ANTICIPATE, HOWEVER, MARCOS WILL CONTINUE TO "PURGE" VIA RETIREMENT SOME OVER-STAYING GENERALS AND LARGER NUMBER OF LESS RANKING OFFICERS AND THEREBY FREE UP SLOTS FOR LOYAL YOUNGER OFFICERS. (THESE RETIREMENTS, HOWEVER, WILL COME WHEN MARCOS THINKS TIMING IS AUSPICIOUS AND WILL PROBABLY NOT BE PUBLICIZED IN THE MANNER IN WHICH CIVILIAN PURGE WAS PUBLICIZED.)
SULLIVAN

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